

03/18/87 09:55 CMA - USD/POLICY CORRESPONDENCE - FILE 1

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UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE - POLICY CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL SHEET

** DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION **		4. SC:	5. I-NUMBER:
1. ORIGINATOR:	2. DOC:	3. DOR:	
HORVATH, C.J. (WH)	082586	082586	86/13477
6. SUBJECT: LTR TO WHITE HOUSE REGARDING MIA/POWS		U	
7.	9. TYPE: LTR	10. REFERENCE:	
8. OCN: WH 15180	** SUSPENSE ACTION **		
	12. ACTION: SR	13. SUSPENSE: 082786	14. EXTEND TO: 000000
11. ACT OFF: D/EAP	** CONTROL **		
15. COORD WITH:			
16. INFO: EAP; ASD/ISA; USD/P.	20. DISPATCHED BY: CM		
17. REMARKS: ACTION: SEE REMARKS SD FORM 14. PDV-OBTAIN MA APPROVAL ON 391.	CY FILED CMD 10/31/86		
18. INTERIM: LTR TO PATRICK CRESSMAN S/HILL 10/30/86 - NOT DISP THRU CMD	CY OSD FILES		
19. FINAL ACTION: DATE 000000	CY D/EAP		
21. CY OSD FILES	CY DSAA/CONGR REL		
22. FINAL: LTR TO CRESSMAN S/HILL 3/13/87 - NOT DISP CMD	CY FILED CMD 3/18/87		
23. CY OSD/LA	CY DSAA/CONGR REL		

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SCREEN NUMBER: 1



INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301-2400

13 MAR 1987

In reply refer to:  
I-86/13477

Mr. Patrick J. Cressman

DATA

Dear Mr. Cressman:

Reference is made to your August 15, 1986 letters to President Reagan and Vice President Bush regarding the case of your brother, Sergeant Peter R. Cressman, a crewmember aboard an EC-47Q lost on a combat mission over Laos on February 5, 1973.

As explained in the October 30 interim response sent to you, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) has been conducting a detailed and exhaustive review of all information concerning your brother's incident. DIA's recently completed analysis, a summary of which is attached, concluded that there is no evidence that any crewmembers on the EC-47Q survived the crash or were captured by enemy forces. DIA also determined that a long-held belief that at least four crewmembers survived and were taken captive had resulted from a misinterpretation in the private sector of sanitized intelligence data as well as from unsubstantiated assertions by a former U.S. Air Force intelligence analyst.

While the results may not accord with our hopes, I trust you share in the satisfaction felt by those of us working the POW/MIA issue that a study of this depth and quality has been conducted on this long-standing case. This intensive effort by DIA typifies the degree of current U.S. Government dedication to seeking answers to the many questions surrounding Americans missing or unaccounted for in Indochina, in keeping with the President's commitment to the families for the fullest possible accounting. Be assured we will continue to pursue this goal for the sake of our missing men, for their families and for all Americans.

Sincerely,

*Howard J. Hill*

Howard J. Hill  
Colonel, USAF  
Principal Advisor  
POW/MIA Affairs

Enclosure  
a/s

DISTRIBUTION:  
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## DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20340

### ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION ON THE LOSS OF EC-47Q BARON 52

#### LOSS INCIDENT

The EC-47Q, call sign Baron 52, and its eight crew members were lost over Laos on 5 February 1973. Four days later a search team inspected the wreckage and located the remains of four crew members. Two of the remains were in the pilot and co-pilot positions. The third was in the engineer's compartment, and the team was able to recover a portion of this body, which was identified as the other co-pilot. The fourth body was near the engineer's compartment. Normally in this type of aircraft there are two positions immediately behind the engineer's compartment. One of these two positions would have been occupied by SSgt Todd M. Melton and the other by either Sgt Joseph A. Matejov or SSgt Peter R. Cressman. Due to physical and time constraints and hostile forces in the area, the team was not able to lift the fuselage to search for additional remains.

The search team also found what appeared to be anti-aircraft artillery shrapnel holes in parts of the wreckage. They found no evidence that the crew were preparing to bail out when the plane crashed; and it did not appear that the aircraft attempted a controlled crash landing. The disposition of the wreckage and other features of the crash site (e.g., absence of skid marks) indicated the aircraft had plunged nearly vertically to earth, bounced once, landed upside down and burned.

Although operating outside the range of ground radar stations during most of its mission, Baron 52 had frequent radio contact with other aircraft in the area. For example, the commander made routine half hourly contacts with, and reported all unusual occurrences to, Moon Beam Airborne Command and Control Center, and also had radio contact with Spectre 20, an AC-130 gunship working in the same area. The electronics warfare crew members also used separate communications equipment to maintain contact with another EC-47, Baron 62, flying in the same general area. The last reported position of Baron 52 was about 8-10 minutes flying time from the crash site.

#### COMMANDER'S DETERMINATION

Following a review of facts associated with the crash, the Commander, 8th Tactical Fighter Wing, in coordination with the Commander, 56th Special Operations Wing, recommended that the status of the crew members be changed

to killed-in-action. The next-of-kin were informed of the status change and the facts supporting the decision in a series of letters dated between 24 February and 17 April 1973, which summarized the events of Baron 52's last mission and the evidence obtained by the search team. The commander added that in view of the capabilities of the radio communications equipment, Baron 52's frequent contacts with other aircraft, and the intensive training of the crew, in case of emergency at least one of the crew would have instinctively used the radios unless the aircraft crashed as a result of some catastrophic incident that immediately and completely incapacitated the crew members. Having reviewed the available facts, the field commanders reported that they believed "there was no reasonable doubt that all the members of the crew of Baron 52 were killed in the crash."

#### INTELLIGENCE REPORTS

Although the observations of the search team and other facts constituted what the field commander believed to be compelling evidence that none of the crew members survived, four intelligence reports, portions of which were declassified for release to the next-of-kin, led others to speculate that the four electronics specialists could have survived. Two of the documents were dated 5 February 1973, another 17 February 1973, and the fourth 2 May 1973. Through a longstanding misinterpretation of these sanitized documents an erroneous impression of survivors was preserved. Yet in fact, the four reports do not relate to the loss of the EC-47Q.

- The initial 5 February report originated in the area of Vinh, North Vietnam, over 240 miles by road north of the EC-47Q crashsite. In that report, which was issued as an unevaluated report as soon as the information was acquired, a North Vietnamese unit near Vinh is said to be holding four prisoners who are not further identified.
- The later 5 February report, based on and issued after a review of the information in the earlier 5 February report, provides no additional insights into the origin or identity of the prisoners.
- The 17 February document is reflective of an enemy unit having downed an aircraft in the area immediately south of the Demilitarized Zone which separated North and South Vietnam, and as such does not relate to the EC-47Q or its crew.
- The 2 May report is yet another analyst's interpretation of the 5 February reporting and is neither new information nor a new report. DIA's review of the evidence shows that the analyst who prepared the

2 May report made a number of arbitrary and erroneous assumptions and speculative assertions in an attempt to infer that the 5 February information originated from a location much closer to the EC-47Q crashsite and that some of the crew survived. The 2 May report therefore actually provides no more conclusive information than the original 5 February report did; however, the unwarranted personal speculation tends to draw attention away from this fact.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the four documents cited above were never conclusively correlated to crew members of Baron 52. The documents initially were entered into the files of the crew members only because the information was acquired shortly after Baron 52 became missing, and it was anticipated that future reporting might permit DIA analysts to make a definitive correlation to the Baron 52 incident. No such reporting was ever received. It is further emphasized that following the loss of Baron 52 none of its crew was ever seen alive, and there is no intelligence whatsoever which would indicate any of the crew survived the incident of loss.

08/11/86 09:43

CMA - USD/POLICY CORRESPONDENCE - FILE 1

#### UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE - POLICY CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL SHEET

1.ORIGINATOR: FOX, J. EDWARD (STATE)  
 2.DOC: 062686  
 3.DOR: 070386  
 4.SC: U  
 5.I-NUMBER: 86/11915  
 6.SUBJECT: REFERS TO CORRESPONDENCE FM THOMAS GREGORY REGARDING MISSING-IN-  
 7.ACTION FROM THE KOREAN WAR.  
 8.OCN: 36856  
 9.TYPE: CON  
 10.REFERENCE:

#### \*\* SUSPENSE ACTION \*\*

11.ACT OFF: D/EAP  
 15.COORD WITH:

12.ACTION: RD  
 13.SUSPENSE: 071886  
 14.EXTEND TO: 080686

#### \*\* CONTROL \*\*

16.INFO: CONG REL  
 17.REMARKS: 2D EXT AWAITING SIGNATURE PER 391 S/CATHY FWD OSD 7/30/86.  
 18.

19.FINAL ACTION: DATE 000000  
 20.DISPACHED BY: CM  
 21.LTR TO CONGR BENNETT S/HILL 8/7/86 - RECD/DISP CMD 8/11/86  
 22.ORIG TO ADDRESSEE CY OSD/LA CY DSAA/CONGR REL CY OSD FILES  
 23.CY FILED CMD 8/11/86

SCREEN NUMBER: 1